

## **Model terms of reference for a committee/group responsible for the development and maintenance of Christian Character (ethos)**

The DBE encourages all church school governing bodies – particularly those considering or in federations/Trusts – to support an Ethos or Christian Character Committee, whose primary function will be to support the school in maintaining and developing its Christian ethos, in accordance with its school vision. The Christian distinctiveness of the school remains a responsibility of **all** governors. In applying the principles below, schools are encouraged to take into consideration their local context.

The school's vision may be based on the following model developed by the Church of England and the Church in Wales:

*'Recognising its historic foundation, the school/federation/academy will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at Parish and Diocesan level.*

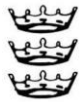
*The school/federation/academy aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of religious belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.'*

The Ethos committee will promote the key features of church school distinctiveness as outlined in the [Church of England's Vision for Education](#), 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good', 2016:

*Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate our vision for education:*

- *Wisdom*
- *Hope*
- *Community*
- *Dignity*

*The vision, in line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, is for the common good of the whole human community and its environment, whether national, regional or local. It is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. It invites collaboration, alliances,*



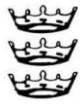
*negotiation of differences, and the forming of new settlements in order to serve the flourishing of a healthy plural society and democracy, together with a healthy plural educational system*

The committee is expected to support the school in all its ways to meet the aspirational aims of the SIAMS process and framework, to facilitate the school to successfully 'live up to its foundations as a Church school...enabling pupils and adults to flourish'. This will include consideration of all forms of flourishing; academic, spiritual and social/emotional included. Spiritual development will be a key part of the work of the school, embedded and understood by all.

It is important to note that, while the Ethos/Christian Character committee may take the lead in promoting and monitoring the distinctive ethos of the school, it remains the responsibility of all governors, not just foundation governors or those in the committee, to have a clear oversight of these matters. It is a joint responsibility owned by all governors and senior leaders.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To ensure that all school leaders contribute to sustaining, developing and nurturing the school's Christian vision and ethos.
2. To ensure that the Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship policies contribute to an institution in which the Christian vision is embedded in every aspect of school life.
3. To ensure the concept of spirituality is agreed and understood by all stakeholders and that spiritual development is embedded in the curriculum and wider day to day life of the school.
4. To ensure the school develops a corporate life which attempts to glorify God in developing the capacity for human flourishing in each person - whether pupil, member of staff, parent or governor.
5. To ensure that Christian principles and values (eg. wisdom, hope, community, dignity) are embedded in the policies and day to day life of the school.
6. To regularly monitor and review the school's self-evaluation as a Church school, ensuring that self-evaluation is ongoing, contributes to school improvement and ensures good preparation for a SIAMS inspection.
7. To ensure the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners and is highly inclusive.
8. To ensure that the profile and priority of RE as an academic curriculum subject is demonstrated and maintained in the school.
9. To ensure learning and teaching in RE is effective and progress in pupils' learning is in line with other core curriculum subjects.
10. To ensure Collective Worship provides for the spiritual development of pupils and staff, of all faiths or of none; and is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.



11. To ensure school leaders and governors focus on and use Christian values to promote the distinctive Christian vision for the school.
12. To ensure effective partnership between the school, the church (and Diocese) and the wider community, including parents and prioritise and value the relationship between the school and its local Church.

## **Membership**

To potentially include – the Incumbent (or nominee), a Foundation Governor, a Parent Governor, a member of the Senior Management Team. The committee may invite Associate Members to join meetings where the agenda is relevant to their interest e.g. representative(s) from additional parishes within the benefice/catchment area; relevant staff subject leaders. The committee is also encouraged to consider how pupils' views may best be heard, possibly through a School Council or Worship committee.

## **Meetings**

The committee may have the same procedural arrangements for the scheduling of meetings and circulation of agendas and papers as has the full Governing Body.

## **Reporting**

The committee shall present a report on its activity to the full Governing Body Meeting each term, to include:

- a summary of the last meeting's minutes
- a monitoring report on the progress of the SIAMS action plan/self-evaluation

## **Monitoring strategies**

- Pupil voice and School Council/Worship council interviews/discussions
- Questionnaires/surveys
- Attending Collective Worship
- Staff interviews
- Observing RE lessons and RE work scrutiny (with subject leader or SLT)
- Reviews of documentation - newsletter, websites, correspondence
- Request reports from staff in relation to their areas of responsibility

## **Review arrangements**

The terms of reference and membership of the committee will be reviewed annually by the full Governing body at its first meeting of the school year.